(b) whether he is aware that Punjabi language is the major language after Hindi in the State;

(c) why Punjabi language has been ignored by the Railways on all the sign boards on railways stations; and

(d) whether government would remove this injustice to the minority language in Haryana State as regards Railways is concerned?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Negligent duty by railway driver

†1697. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the driver of the train starting from Jagadhri and terminating to Delhi went away after leaving the train at Khekra station on 14th December, 2007 owing to completion of his duty-time;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this treatment of the driver caused extreme difficulties to the passengers;

(c) the period of time after which another driver was arranged by the Railways; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to prevent the reoccurrence of such incident in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. No difficulty was faced by the passengerss as this was not a scheduled passenger carrying train. This was rake of empty passenger coaches.

(c) Another driver was arranged on the same day within 8 hours.

(d) Generally, detention does not occur to passenger carrying trains on account of non-availability of crews. Due care is taken to ensure that the trains runs are completed within the stipulated duty period of the driver, Stoppage to freight trains may sometimes take place, but his is well planned and deemed action is taken, as required depending on the availability of crew and the priority of the train.

Need of price regulatory mechanism

1698. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD:
SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian domestic steel producers have recently hiked the prices of steel citing prevailing global trends in steel prices;

(b) the details of the increase of prices by the steel producers during the last three years and the total percentage of such increase;

(c) whether Government has taken this issue seriously and propose to rein the steel industry through a price regulatory mechanism; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) if so, the details thereof, and if not, the options Government has to overcome the said situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) and (b) The price of steel items in the domestic market has shown an upward trend mainly due growing demand and rise in cost of raw materials required for steel manufacturing. The price of select steel items in the retail market of Mumbai for the period for February 2008, February 2007, February 2006 and Feburary 2005, alongwith percentage variation, is given in the Statement (*See* below).

(c) and (d) Government does not propose to bring any law for creation of a regulatory authority for controling price of steel. In a liberalized scenario the price of steel is determined by the interplay of the market forces. Nonetheless, the Government has taken the following measures for stabilizing the steel prices in the domestic market;

(i) The Government has over the years reduced the import duty on steel to the current level of 5%.

(ii) The import duties on steel making inputs have also been reduced over the years and also exempted in case of coking coal. In case of iron ore it has been reduced to 2%.

(iii) In the Union Budget Proposal 2008-09, the import duty on melting scrap has been reduced from 5% to NIL.

(iv) In order to ease the supply of iron ore to domestic steel producers Government has imposed an export duty at the rate of Rs. 300 per tonne on export of all varieties iron ore lumps. Export duty has also been imposed at the rate of Rs. 300 per tonne on export of iron ore fines with more than 62% Fe content and at the rate Rs. 50 per tonne on export of iron ore fines with less than 62% Fe content.

(v) General Rate of Excise Duty has also been reduced from 16% to 14% in the Union Budget Proposal 2008-09.

Statement

Retail Price at Mumbai on Quarterly Basis

(In Rs./tonnes)

PERIOD	Pig Iron LM Gr.IV	TMT 10mm	Wire Rods 8mm	Rounds 16mm	Plates 12mm	HR Coil 2.5mm	CR Coil 0.63mm	GP Sheets 0.63mm 100mm	Pencil Ingot/ Billets
February 2008	21700 (19.23)	35600 (23.73)	32250 (19.82)	35500 (27.93)	34750 (3.73)	35250 (6.02)	38000 (8.57)	43250 (1.76))	28900 (20.04)
February 2007	18200 (29.59)	29500 (1.03)	27750 (14.22)	27750 (7.83)	33500 (31.58)	33250 (26.32)	35000 (19.39)	42500 (32.17)	24075 (12.24)
February 2006	15600 (-17.02)	24250 (-13.70)	22400 (-14.18)	23750 (-15.18)	24500 (-27.30)	25250 (-26.06)	29500 (-19.73)	34000 (-11.69)	19650 (-13.82)
February 2005	18800	28100	26100	2800	33700	34150	36750	38500	22800

(SOURCE: ERU/JPC)

NOTE: (i) Prices are inclusive of Excise Duty and Sales Tax.

(ii) All prices are indicative.

(iii) Figures in the parenthesis indicate %age variation over the previous year.